

justify this system of migratory labour, which is inseparably part of the whole structure of Apartheid. Migratory labour is socially disastrous, economically stupid and morally rotten and yet it is the lynch-pin of Government policy.

But opponents of the Government are told that in spite of the difficulties Apartheid, Bantustan or 'eiesoortige ontwikkeling' is the only solution of an almost insoluble problem. After all Africans in the South have a better standard of living than anywhere else in Africa and relations between White masters and their Black servants are in many cases good. But our opposition to 'Separate Development' goes deeper than this:

Moçambique Writing

RICHARD RIVE

WHEN SETTING OUT on a Farfield Foundation Fellowship to study literary trends in Africa I received information from many authorities that very little if anything was happening up the East Coast. I was told that only two people in Kenya were writing short stories, and that besides that there was nothing else.

It was therefore with a sense of hopelessness that I arrived in the pleasant and remarkably clean capital of Moçambique, Lourenço Marques. I was pleasantly surprised to find that there was a fever of literary activity, that writers were writing, and arguments were raging and that there was a flourish of creative work.

Lourenço Marques wears a façade of prosperity, well-being and stability highly conducive to literary production. I was soon disillusioned. I saw more soldiers, both black and white, in the streets than I had ever come across in South Africa. Security Police and spies were everywhere. South Africa it is said is a frightened country. Moçambique is a cautious and frightened province. Portugal uses strong-arm methods in order to establish compliance and submission, and this self-conscious feudalistic approach makes for a stultification in free expression.

An incongruity in South African policy is the fact that very seldom if ever is creativity in art forms ever stifled because it is critical of situations. In fact the only literature from the Republic which has any guarantee of selling abroad are works highly critical of the regime. I couldn't imagine a highly successful pro-apartheid novel or poem. Writers openly attack the system, are published and are read both inside and outside the Republic. Internal censorship has temporarily had to retreat before public opinion. In Moçambique things are different. Here the writer is suspect if he becomes critical of the status quo. He can

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perhaps it can be summed up best in the words of the old Chinese proverb: 'To feed a man without loving him is to treat him like a pig; To love a man without respecting him is to treat him like a house-hold pet.'

While one may commend the development of agriculture and industry taking place in the Bantustans one must realise that this by itself will solve no problems. In fact so long as Bantustan is used as an excuse to avoid tackling realistically the economic and political problems of this country it must be condemned as the fraud that it is. The future of South Africa lies not in the country districts but in the cities: and the sooner white South Africans realise this, the better. ●

be subject to interrogation, arrest, jailing, and having his works confiscated. The atmosphere is stifling for free expression and the mass of activity in spite of this is encouraging and remarkable.

The most important poet in Moçambique, and one of great standing in the local literary world is Jose Creaverinha, a Coloured man. Born in Lourenço Marques in 1922 he received the benefits of a very limited education, and is essentially self-taught. Speaking to him through an interpreter I realised that this was a man of high intellectual grasp, expressive in language and strongly feeling his Colouredism. His knowledge of Portuguese literature is phenomenal, and his use of language strong and forceful. He finds his inspiration in everyday happenings and recreates out of this rich imagery and symbolism.

In his poem "Latitude Zero" he deplores the fact that the house of his dead mother, has been broken down at the discretion of the landowner, and in its place is a desecration of all that his ancestors had stood for.

Listen to his plaintive tones when he speaks of the past,

In this place, where the father of your father's father
In sunshine and rain
Through two moons of work
Had built it (the house of reed walls) up.

He continues,

And where your grave lies, mother,
Under the Mafura trees bowed down by golden fruit,
Where beer fermented for the mass of Madala Matsinhe
Walls of cement now heavily weigh.

His bitterness reaches a climax when he says,

Registered in the lines of a plan
In the deeds office of the district,
Sleep your perpetual sleep, mother,
... today it is (that) this house of reed walls
And 35 plants of the manioca
Are crushed by the threads of steel
Of the monster caterpillar of the concession owner.

He reaches the depths of his despair when he realises the hopelessness

In this 'Latitude Zero' of this plot of snakes and stones,
In this black reserve where now we live,
We, black men, black women,
Black children.

Moçambique poetry by no means always rests at this negative level of despair. Creaverinha himself writes in varying moods. The painter and poet Malngatana shoots a wry smile at the Magaiça, the Portuguese African who goes to work in the South African mines, and spending all his money on some South African moll, comes back empty-handed, and is forced to work

in the road-gang in order to pay his taxes.
Listen to the simplicity of his lyricism as he says,
Magaça, Magaça, Magaça.
Oh the pennies and the shillings
Which you have not brought, back.
Your shilling band is empty.

Where did you put it, Magaça?
Your wife and children are weeping
Because they want to eat
And they say, father, husband, give us.

That South African miss
Who led you astray when you were returning,
All that she told you were lies
And you forgot everything, and your family.

Magaça, Magaça, Magaça,
You have come back without money,
To pay your taxes.
You'll be sent to the road-gang.

The simplicity and directness and closeness to the theme is reminiscent of Langston Hughes, the American negro poet. Valente Malangatana was born in Marracuene in the Regedoria Magaia under Chief Diqua Magaia in 1936. His early life is symptomatic of emergent Africa, filled with witch-doctors, superstition, heart-breaks at families torn apart while the breadwinner is sweating in South African mines. Encouraged materially and creatively by the Moçambique architect, Amancio Guedes, he has developed a place for himself as a talented painter as well as a poet still close to the rumbustiousness of emergent Africa. In "To The Anxious Mother" he describes his birth.

... but grandmother who seemed like a madwoman
Always looking and looking again,
Because the flies came at me,
And the mosquitoes harried me,
God who also watched over me,
Was my old granny's friend.

Notice the richness of his metaphorical usage in his poem "In The Cool Waters of the River."

... Women's hair shall be the blanket
Over my coffin when another Artist
Calls me to Heaven to paint me.

Rui Knopfli is a poet of different calibre. A young white man, he is as thoroughly part of Africa in roots and identification so as to belie any notions of an African Personality mystique. His poetry is rich in imagery, ably assisted by a strong metaphysical backing, whether nostalgic and tender as in his poem "Deanie and some Jazz"

It was like an echo of memories
past

of things long buried
And suddenly

all became clear.

... and then we would stick again
To Brubeck and Desmond
Playing the records over and over.

or when in his 'Monotonous Song' he speaks feelingly of the Africans in the Johannesburg bus boycott,

'a man staring
and walking on the other
side of the sidewalk.
A dark-skinned man

His sympathies are obvious when he says,

'but a man just the same
A man, a thousand men,
A million, ten million men,
All by himself,
Ten million men.

Although the Moçambique poets seem to be and are strongly affected by what is happening next door to them in the Republic of South Africa, there is also soul-searching and introspection into matters directly related to them. I met the poet Virgilio de Lemos three weeks after he had spent more than a year in prison on charges against the security of the regime. A modest, unassuming man with kindly, laughing eyes, he has become a local hero in spite of himself. His is the kind of spirit that cannot be cramped by laws and statute books, and his obvious love and identification with his country causes him to write poems about injustices which he feels detract from the essential significance and role of his homeland. If humanitarianism and identification with the underdog are treasonable offences, then Virgilio de Lemos is guilty. Here is a white man Africa can be proud to call one of her sons. In his collection *Poemas do tempo presente* in which appears his poem "The City", he sees hope for the future when he says,

Lourenço Marques!
Your tradition
Will appear in the blood of your children
Tomorrow.

There is a universality about his entreaties for understanding and brotherhood.

The children of the Mamas
And our children
Will use fraternal greetings,
And Byxile and 'Good Day'
Will be heard everyday
In an everyday language'

He realises that the guarantee for the future will only be reached through sacrifice and suffering,

The blood of those who die
In turn
Will strengthen new souls
With purer feelings
And nobler gestures
When distant parallels fuse
And express only love.

I consider this to be one of the most powerful expressions against any forms of injustice found in Moçambique poetry. In a language rich with imagery he makes a universal plea,

I do not wish my dream lost
In an unknown space,
Mysteriously.
The happy hour
Of transfigured love
Must be a straight line,
A perfect perpendicular
Uniting men without wars,
Men and earth, both dust.

And then his Vision Splendid,

I want the enchantment
Of lilacs and jacaranda
The strong scent of the canho tree
And the sweet murmur
Of your voice, O City, that is a melody
Entering the hearts of people
In nights humid and warm.

The poetry in Moçambique is young, the writers youthful and grappling with new problems. It has assured itself a place in the literature of emergent Africa. In spite of stultifying restrictions and threats of repression, the poets are expressing themselves and will continue to do so.